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March 3, 2001

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FDA Commissioner Jane Henney
Dockets Management Branch (HFA 305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fisher's Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, Maryland 20852

RE: Dockets 00N-1396 and OOD-1598

Dear Ms. Henney,

I am writing to share my thoughts about the FDA's proposed policy regarding genetically engineered foods. It is my understanding that the proposed policy would not require any pre-market safety testing or labeling of GE foods. This is completely unacceptable.

Genetically engineered foods have been linked to many health and environmental hazards. There is much that scientists do not know about GE foods, especially with regard to long term effects. Studies done by respected scientists and doctors have shown disturbing results due to the use and development of GE foods. I list a few below:

- A study in the New England Journal of Medicine proved that individuals who were allergic to Brazil nuts suffered the same allergic reaction when they consumed GE soybeans that contained Brazil nut genes. People who closely read labels to see if their food allergens are in the ingredient list could unknowingly consume a food they are allergic to with potentially fatal results.
- A study in the Journal of Medical Foods found that GE soybeans contained less phytoestrogens than natural soybeans. I want the maximum amount of nutrition from the food that I eat.
- A study in the scientific journal *Nature* proved that GE crops can transfer GE traits to weedy relatives, thus creating more aggressive weeds. This would lead to the use of stronger pesticides, which negatively impact people's health after they consume foods treated with these chemicals.
- Additional studies have shown that crops genetically engineered with *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT) cause harm to beneficial insects like ladybugs and Monarch butterflies.

There are many other reasons NOT to encourage the development of GE foods. This is another legal matter entirely. However, I feel strongly that as Americans we have the right to know what we are putting into our bodies. By not requiring the labeling of GE foods, the FDA is preventing us from making informed decisions. The corporations creating the GE foods have a lot of power and money and stand to make a great profit on the use of these technologies. Despite this, the consumers still have the right to know what they are eating. I ask that you rethink your policy to require the labeling and pre-market testing of GE foods.

Sincerely,

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Cheryl Sturgis

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00N-13916 and 00D-1598

